



2021: The State of Chatham County Report

A Year of Response, Recovery, and Resiliency

Like communities across the nation, Chatham County continued to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Chatham County has led a successful campaign to vaccinate the

community against the virus. From mass-vaccination clinics and visits to those who are homebound to vaccination events at churches, schools, long-term care facilities, workplaces, and the detention center, staff and volunteers worked hard to make the vaccine available across Chatham County, including addressing disparities among marginalized communities.



Chatham County spent much of the year responding to, and recovering from, a ransomware event that incapacitated many of the county's business systems for a period of two to three months. The response to the cyber incident on Chatham County included extensive mitigation efforts to ensure the county's network is more secure and resilient moving forward.

Even with the pandemic and cyber event, Chatham County coordinated a yearlong commemoration of its 250th anniversary. Through diverse community-centered events and activities that highlighted Chatham County's uniqueness, rich history, and promising future, the festivities focused on five key areas – Creative Arts, Community and Diversity, Growth and Change, Agriculture, and Natural Environment.

The county's commitment to serving the community, through good times and bad, demonstrates that Chatham County is the best place to live, work, and raise a family.



Chatham Comprehensive Plan Activities Underway

- ◆ The Chatham County Planning Department is in the early project orientation stage of the county's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) project. This project will merge, rewrite, and update multiple ordinances and regulations while evaluating and improving upon existing standards. This project is anticipated to be completed in two years through diligent and fast-paced efforts from county staff, consultants, boards and committees, and key stakeholders.
- ◆ Seaforth High School opened on schedule for the 2021-22 school year.
- ◆ Chatham County Schools broke ground on its new Central Services building near Pittsboro.
- ◆ The construction of the new Emergency Operations Center and 911 Communications hub is underway near Pittsboro.
- ◆ The upgrade to the county's emergency communications radio system is underway:
 - ◇ Five new towers have been constructed and a sixth site is being finalized.
 - ◇ New radios for all public safety agencies in the county are being distributed.
- ◆ The Chatham County Public Utilities Department continued its work with the Western Intake Partners in the planning of a future, joint water treatment plant.
- ◆ Construction of the new facility for the Chatham County Animal Resource Center (ARC) near Pittsboro was completed in summer 2021. Renovation of the old facility also is complete.
- ◆ Chatham County Parks and Recreation master planning continues:
 - ◇ Construction was completed for the Parks & Recreation Department's first community center at Chatham Grove Elementary School.
 - ◇ The county's first Dog Park was opened at The Park at Briar Chapel.

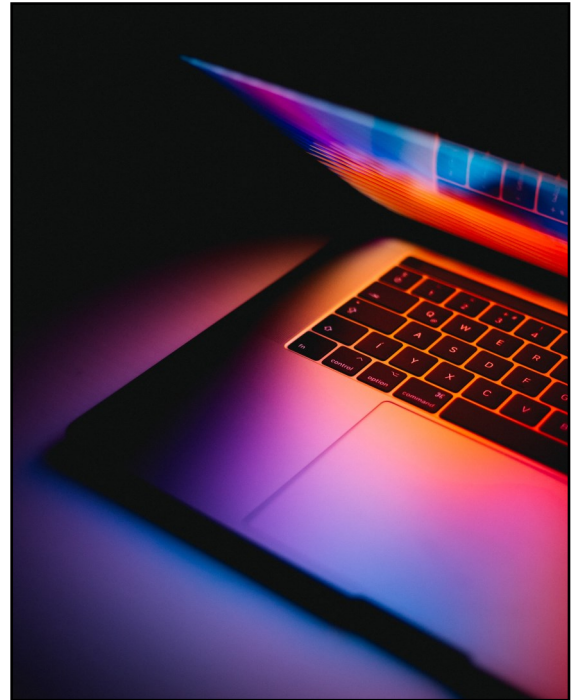
Cyber Incident: From Response and Recovery to Rebuilding a More Secure Network

On October 28, 2020, Chatham County Management and Information Systems (MIS) staff identified a ransomware attack against the County network that resulted in the encryption of much of its network infrastructure and associated business systems. MIS staff quickly isolated the affected systems by stopping communication across the county network and externally. Staff immediately reported the crime to the Chatham County Sheriff's Office as well as enlisted assistance from other local and state agencies with specialized ransomware experience. Chatham County Emergency Management coordinated the county's response while MIS rebuilt network infrastructure.

Continuing County Operations

Chatham County Emergency Management led efforts to ensure county staff could continue serving the public:

- ◆ Provided 159 laptops to staff (from 4 neighboring counties and 2 State agencies)
- ◆ Established 54 temporary email accounts for staff
- ◆ Provided 46 Internet hotspots to staff
- ◆ Set up 52 temporary phones (VoIP and cellular phones, 2 conference phones)
- ◆ Set up 15 temporary printers
- ◆ Provided 5 tactical rapid communications kits (LTE/WiFi/Telephony)
- ◆ Established 1 phone hotline for Elections Office (5 phones – 1 main number)
- ◆ Set up 1 HD video conferencing system (for First Appearances at Detention Center)



Rebuilding the County Network

Chatham County MIS staff and agency partners conducted a full rebuild of County network infrastructure. The county worked with its existing software vendors to restore business systems:

- ◆ Reimaged and redeployed more than 700 staff devices (computers and tablets)
- ◆ Recovered data for, and reestablished more than 30 county business systems/applications

Improving the County Network

Along with the extensive mitigation efforts taken by the county during the cyber incident, Chatham County MIS also evaluated the existing security protocols in an effort to further build upon the security of the county network. The county evaluated and implemented additional security measures and reinforced employee training:

- ◆ Migration to Microsoft Office 365
- ◆ Security Awareness & Email Training
- ◆ Multi-Factor Authentication
- ◆ Additional Network Security Monitoring
- ◆ Next Generation Anti-Virus Software (NGAV)

Chatham 250: Commemorating Chatham County's 250th Anniversary

Chatham County began planning its 250th anniversary celebrations in the summer of 2020 with the formation of the Chatham 250 Planning Committee, made up of representatives from across the county with diverse backgrounds and unique skills – but with one common thread – their passion for Chatham County. Chatham 250 celebrations kicked off on April 10, 2021, with Founding Day in downtown Pittsboro. Throughout 2021 there were numerous events, projects, and programs across the county designed to celebrate five key areas that make Chatham so special – Creative Arts, Community and Diversity, Growth and Change, Agriculture, and Natural Environment.



Chatham 250 Passport Experience

The Chatham 250 Passport Experience was an invitation to explore Chatham County. Designed as a “self-guided tour meets scavenger hunt,” each of the five Chatham 250 Passports - Creative Arts, Growth and Change, Community and Diversity, Agriculture and Natural Environment - offered nearly 20 accessible and fun activities that were also designed for a COVID-19 safe environment. The Chatham 250 passport aspired to connect participants with new people, places, and experiences in Chatham County.

Chatham 250 Events Inspired by Celebration Themes

These community events occurred virtually, in-person, and in hybrid formats.

The event in celebration of the Natural Environment theme was Great Chatham County Camp Out, held on June 26, 2021, into June 27 at B. Everett Jordan Dam. This unique camping experience included an exciting evening of cultural and nature programs, including storytelling with a Bynum Front Porch storyteller, a campfire sing-a-long with musician Eric Sommers, stargazing with the Raleigh Astronomy Club, and guided hikes and ranger programs with the staff from B. Everett Jordan Dam.



LEARN About Chatham's Rich History

The Chatham 250 Historical Content Committee launched the LEARN section of the Chatham 250 website: <https://www.chatham250.com/learn>

The Chatham 250 Historical Content Committee worked diligently to gather historical images, documents, news clippings, and oral histories. The LEARN section of the Chatham 250 website is the culminating showcase for presenting this thoughtfully collected history.

Inspired by the theme of Community and Diversity, the Church and Communities Project was an opportunity to look back at where the many communities in Chatham County have come from and learn about their many stories. On the project page, visitors can browse the collection of more than 40 Chatham County church histories, including wonderful songs, photos, artworks, and histories.

2020 Census: Making Chatham Count

Chatham County began efforts in 2019 to educate the community about the importance of completing the 2020 Census. The Chatham Complete Count Committee (CCCC) made up of county, municipal, church, organization, the Hispanic Liaison and business leaders across Chatham County, participated in numerous community outreach efforts for more than a year.

United States®
**Census
2020**

The 2020 Census was the 24th census in U.S. history and marked many firsts. This census was the first time that households were invited to respond to the census online. Perfect timing, as the world began to navigate a global pandemic. In response to the pandemic, the deadline to respond to the census extended beyond the traditional summer deadline to October 16, 2020.

At its close, **70.8% of Chatham County households had completed their 2020 Census**, without a census worker arriving at their door. Chatham County's self-response rate was higher than NC's self-response rate of 63.4%. The U.S. Census Bureau did its best to contract workers that reflected the demographics, language, and residency of the areas in which they would work, in hopes of increasing response rates. County leaders hope that census workers reached the remaining 29.2% of Chatham County households that did not respond to the census on their own.



By August 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau released some census data to allow states to begin redistricting. The data revealed that **North Carolina's population grew enough to gain a 14th seat in Congress in the House of Representatives**, which impacts policies, initiatives, and programs at the federal level.

The data also showed that Chatham County's population grew over the past 10 years, including a one percent growth in the Latino population. The population counts are important for determining how much funding Chatham County will be allocated for federal programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Head Start.

As more census data are released, the county can better understand and support the community it serves.



**Everyone Counts.
Todos Contamos.**

Chatham County Leadership

Major Changes



Assistant County Manager – **Carolyn Miller** was appointed assistant county manager of human resources in March 2021. Miller had 22 years of experience as the human resources director prior to this appointment and has 25 total years of service with the county. She is the director and one of the original developers of the Chatham Leadership Academy and has overseen the growth and the development of the human resources function in Chatham from the time it was a one-person office.



Finance – **Hope Tally** was appointed finance director in February 2021 after long-time director Vicki McConnell retired. Tally had 19 years of local governmental finance experience with Chatham County prior to becoming finance director. She is well versed in compliance, auditing, financial reporting, and strategic financial planning. Tally was a contributing member of the team that worked diligently to move the County to AAA status with S&P Global Ratings in 2014.



Economic Development Corporation – **Michael Smith** joined Chatham County as president of the Economic Development Corporation in January 2021. Smith held economic development director roles with both the Sanford Area Growth Alliance (SAGA) and in Stanly County, and he served in economic development leadership roles in Davidson and Iredell Counties. Smith was with the NC Department of Commerce in Raleigh for seven years as a project manager and in marketing and business development. His private sector experience includes nine years in the executive recruitment industry.

Chatham County Employee of the Year

Instead of honoring one employee, all 533 Chatham County government employees were named Chatham County Employee of the Year. “There were so many deserving nominees, and it was an impossible decision to select just one,” said Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne. “It has been an unprecedented year navigating COVID-19 and the cyber incident, and every single employee stepped up to adapt so that Chatham County could continue providing our critical services to the community. I could not be more proud of the teamwork, innovation and resilience of Chatham County staff.”



Economic Development

Chatham County retains a large agricultural base with a mixture of industrial, tourism, and service businesses helping support the county's economy. Strong economic influences in surrounding areas including Cary, Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, and the Research Triangle Park have a positive effect on the growth of Chatham County's population and economy, especially in the northern and eastern sections of the county. A large number of Chatham County residents commute outside the county for employment, with the urban areas being the top destinations for jobs. The regional prosperity has enabled Chatham County to rank fifth among the state's 100 counties in median household income. The county experienced a 20% growth rate from 2010-2020 according to U.S. Census data and is among the 10 fastest growing counties in the state.

Industry Development

- ◆ Charter Furniture expanded its operations into a new facility in Siler City. The expansion brought 101 jobs into Chatham County with a \$1.5 million investment in its new facility in addition to the purchase of the existing building.



Polar Onyx, near Chapel Hill

- ◆ PolarOnyx, a laser 3D manufacturing company, relocated from California into the former Performance Bicycle building off 15-501 near Chapel Hill, generating additional jobs and investments in the county.

- ◆ The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) office has responded to an unprecedented range of projects considering Chatham County. When working these projects, the EDC presents

the Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing Site, the Triangle Innovation Point (formerly Moncure Megasite) and Chatham County as the right place for companies to locate and do business.

Workforce Development

- ◆ The EDC collaborated with Chatham Literacy and NC Works Career Center-Chatham to provide workforce readiness training for Chatham County residents. The trainings covered COVID-19 in the workplace, professionalism, teamwork, and networking. Upon completion of the courses, participants received a certificate and/or an opportunity to apply for a National Career Readiness Certification.
- ◆ The EDC continues to deepen its existing relationships with workforce partners like Central Carolina Community College, Chatham County Schools and many others to assist industries in filling their positions and providing quality jobs to the community.

COVID-19 Recovery

- ◆ To address questions concerning the COVID-19 vaccine, the EDC partnered with the Chatham County Public Health Department and a local attorney to answer local businesses' questions about the vaccine and the workplace.
- ◆ The EDC Board of Directors voted to pivot the existing Chatham Loan Fund to address COVID-19 challenges and recovery. The updated guidelines allowed for greater flexibility in the program and additional uses.

Change in Chatham: Plans, Progress, and Possibilities

Building Boom

- ◆ Chatham County continues to see growth in single family homes (25% increase FY20 to FY21) and a sustained increase in the number of multi-family units. The majority of the new dwelling units continue to be in the county jurisdiction; although an increasing share is being built in Pittsboro's jurisdiction.
- ◆ Commercial development is mostly concentrated on the US Highway 15-501 corridor with major retail and multi-family units being built at intersections with Taylor Road and Northwood Boulevard.
 - ◇ This development includes new grocery stores, convenience stores and restaurants.
 - ◇ New county buildings such as the Administration Building for Chatham County Schools and Emergency Operations Center are being constructed on Renaissance Drive.
 - ◇ New commercial development is expected to continue increasing along US 15-501, from the Briar Chapel area to around Pittsboro and also in the Moncure area.



The Mosaic at Chatham Park, Pittsboro
The largest commercial development in Chatham County



Tripp Cottages, Siler City

Tripp Cottages in Siler City were recently completed. It is one of the larger subdivisions for Siler City, which has seen continued growth. This subdivision is located off W. Third Street, just west of downtown Siler City.

The Perch Apartments, Pittsboro

Located off Taylor Road, near the Central Carolina Community College Chatham Health Sciences Center. There will be 200 units at this location with a club house and pool. Across the road from these apartments will be a new Food Lion shopping center which will be issued a permit soon.



Chatham County Animal Resource Center, Pittsboro

- ◆ Construction of the new facility for the Chatham County Animal Resource Center (ARC) was completed in summer 2021.
 - ◇ Renovation of the old facility also is complete.
 - ◇ The ARC is located on Renaissance Drive near Pittsboro.



Chatham County Animal Resources Director Karen Rogers provides a tour of the ARC to Chatham County leaders and members of the public.

Housing Development and Assistance

Affordable Housing continues to be a top priority in Chatham County. Affordable Housing is defined widely as housing that does not cost – rent or mortgage – more than 30% of a person’s gross annual income (including utilities and insurance). Everyone deserves affordable housing, which is why the county continues to invest in the creation and preservation of safe and affordable options for all residents.

2021 Highlights

- ◆ Wallick Communities Inc. was selected in August 2021 for tax credits to build 72 units in Siler City behind UNC Hospital in Chatham Business Park. This income-restricted development, which is expected to come online in 2023, is receiving \$85,000 from the Housing Trust Fund (2020-2021 cycle) and will be built on formerly County-owned land.
- ◆ The Retreat at Pittsboro, a 48-unit tax credit development opened its doors.



Future Site of Oak View Apartments, in Siler City, 72-unit tax credit development by Wallick Communities. The community is expected to open in Fall 2023.

Program Highlights

- ◆ The Chatham County Housing Trust Fund (HTF) entered its 3rd year of existence. Since its creation in 2018, the HTF has provided nearly \$600,000 in grants and low-interest loans to projects that create and preserve affordable housing units across Chatham County. Projects that received awards have ranged from supportive housing, tax credit properties, affordable single-family housing, and emergency home repair and rehabilitation.
- ◆ The HTF has invested in the creation of 162 new affordable housing units, 90 of which are now open and online. The remaining units are expected to open in 2023.



The Retreat at Pittsboro apartments is a 48-unit tax credit development by Third Wave Housing. The development is fully leased as of the end of October 2021. This is the second property Third Wave Housing has developed in Chatham County since 2018. The first was Siler School Square (44 apartments) in Siler City, another HTF recipient.

- ◆ The HTF has invested in the preservation and repair of more than 80 homes in Chatham County for low-and-moderate income households by partnering with Rebuilding Together of the Triangle.
- ◆ In 2021 the Emergency Housing Fund (EHF) has served over 40 households so far, by working with community partners, the Department of Social Services and Court programs to assist with emergency hotel stays, utility assistance, as well as eviction and foreclosure prevention.

Education Highlights

Chatham County Schools Facilities Projects

Chatham County made significant progress on major school facility projects in FY 2019-2020 in the county's Capital Improvement Plan.

- ◆ Seaforth High School opened on schedule for the 2021-22 school year. While Chatham Grove opened last year, students did not get to spend a great deal of time in their new building, but they are enjoying it this year.
- ◆ In addition, Chatham County Schools has broken ground on the location for its new Central Services building. The project is projected to be finished in December 2022.



Seaforth High School, Pittsboro

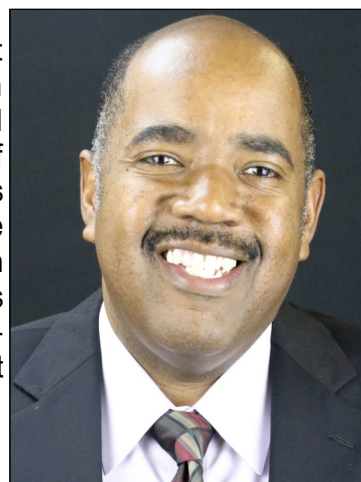


Chatham County Schools Achievements & Honors

- ◆ Assessment update: The achievement data for the 2020-2021 school year showed the impact of COVID-19. While Chatham showed decreases in many areas, the district outperformed the state in virtually every area. This past year the district did not get school performance grades or growth status for schools.
- ◆ Chatham County Schools has been named a Best Community for Music Education by the NAAM Foundation for the third straight year. Chatham is one of only two school districts in the state to achieve this honor.
- ◆ The Chatham County Schools finance department won two of the highest honors for financial reporting: The Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International and the Certificate of Association Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from The Government Finance Officers Association.

Chatham County Schools Leadership

Dr. Anthony Jackson was selected as the new superintendent of Chatham County Schools, starting in July 2021. Dr. Jackson brings a wealth of experience to the school district, having led several districts in North Carolina and Virginia over the course of his career. Dr. Jackson was 2020 Superintendent of the Year for the state of North Carolina and is serving as president of the North Carolina School Superintendent Association.



Showcasing the district's commitment to providing equity for all students, the district created a new position in 2021. **Mr. Chris Poston** is the new executive director for Excellence and Opportunity for the school district. He will be working to support schools to ensure that all students are successful.

Chatham County Promise

All eligible Chatham County residents who graduate from a public high school, private school, or homeschool for the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 will be eligible for up to two years of free in-state tuition and required fees at Central Carolina Community College.

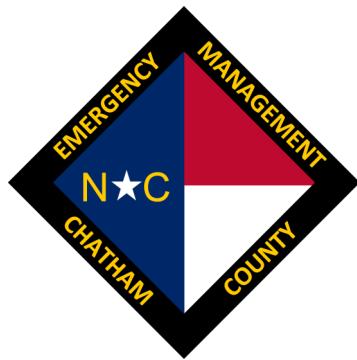
- ◆ Students served 2020-2021 school year: 106
- ◆ Additional students being served 2021-2021 school year: 101

Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Emergency Management

Chatham County Emergency Management (CCEM) continued to be engaged in coronavirus pandemic and mass vaccination activities, as well as coordinated the county's response to a serious cyber incident, severe weather, and other threats.

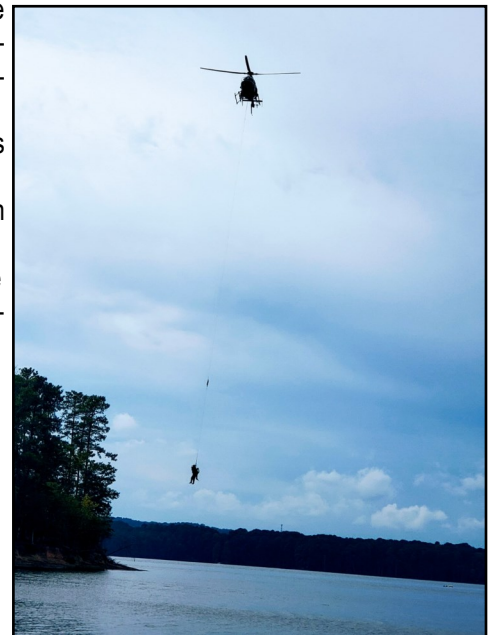
- ◆ The Chatham County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has remained activated for 303 days, the longest activation in the department's history, to coordinate the county's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, cyber incident, 2020 Presidential Election, and severe weather events. The EOC team is made up of decisionmakers, subject matter experts, County staff, and local partners who tackle the most challenging incidents and threats the community faces.
- ◆ CCEM completed its 5-year major update to the Cape Fear Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was adopted by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. Hazard Mitigation Plans seek to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to life, property, and businesses losses from hazard events.
- ◆ CCEM continued to validate local plans and training by resuming an assertive exercise schedule. This year's exercises shared a focus on managing major incidents, interoperable communications, and coordination with local and regional mutual aid resources. Exercises this year include:



- ◆ Chatham AUXCOMM Communications Drill
- ◆ NC Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team Exercise (see right)
- ◆ Aquatic Incident Management Exercise
- ◆ US Army Drop Zone Support on Jordan Lake
- ◆ National Election Cyber Exercise
- ◆ School Reopening Tabletop Exercise



Rendering of the new Emergency Operations Center and 911 Communications hub under construction on Renaissance Drive near Pittsboro.



Emergency Response Team



The Chatham County Community Emergency Response Team (Chatham CERT) continued to play an active role in Chatham County's preparedness and resiliency through training, exercises, response and recovery activities throughout FY21.

- ◆ Coordinated all non-clinical volunteers for Public Health's COVID-19 mass vaccination clinics. (see left)
 - ◆ Chatham CERT members, Chatham Auxiliary Communications (Chatham AUXCOMM), and other volunteers worked side-by-side with county staff to manage traffic, check-in, and logistics.
- ◆ Received the 2021 Partnership of the Year Award by the Chatham County Board of Health for their efforts.
- ◆ Offered training to the community throughout the year on safety and preparedness topics, including: COVID-19 & Mass Vaccination Planning, Hurricane Preparedness, Home Safety & Security, Stress Management, Damage Assessments, Commodity Distribution, Traffic Control, and Radio Communications.

Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Public Health

COVID-19 Response and Vaccination Campaign

The Chatham County Public Health Department has led efforts to respond to COVID-19 and vaccinate the Chatham community against COVID-19.

- ◆ From mass-vaccination clinics (see right) and visits to those who are homebound to vaccination events at churches, schools, long-term care facilities, workplaces, and the detention center, Chatham County Public Health Department staff and volunteers worked hard to make the vaccine available across Chatham County, including addressing disparities among marginalized communities.
- ◆ Public Health worked closely with Chatham County Emergency Management and the Chatham County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), who was named Partner of the Year by the Board of Health for its invaluable service during these vaccination efforts.
- ◆ From January 1-June 30, 2021, the Chatham County Public Health Department administered more than 7,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, building many important relationships and partnerships along the way.
- ◆ Public Health answered the call to provide guidance to many settings to prevent COVID-19 transmission, including schools, congregate living facilities, businesses, and childcare centers. This included regular presentations to the Board of Education and Board of Commissioners, as well as weekly or bi-weekly meetings with long-term care facilities, childcare centers, and restaurants.
- ◆ Public Health has provided education and outreach about the COVID-19 virus, vaccination, and testing through phone calls, its website, social media accounts, community presentations, community events and at businesses throughout Chatham.



Non-COVID-19 Accomplishments



- ◆ EMBRACe (Equity for Moms and Babies Realized Across Chatham) (see left), a collaborative effort between Public Health, Social Services, Piedmont Health Services, Chatham Hospital, the Chatham Health Alliance and Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity, continued to work together on systems and service alignment in support of moms and babies in Chatham County. In 2020, EMBRACe supported the adoption of a coordinated referral protocol between WIC and Social Services, completed an organizational equity assessment across the core partner organizations, launched a series of Story Circles with women in Chatham focused on experiences of pregnancy, labor and delivery, and motherhood, and worked together to establish a collaborative governance structure to sustain the partnership and foster deeper collaboration in pursuit of health equity in Chatham County.
- ◆ Environmental Health staff incorporated use of Open Gov software system to streamline and track applications and provide opportunity for public to submit applications online and conducted an Annual Homeowners of Wells and Septic Systems class virtually for the first time in partnership with Cooperative Extension.
- ◆ The Chatham County Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program received a grant from UNC Institute for the Environment to help support education efforts with residents and community partners about lead poisoning prevention
- ◆ Public Health partnered with NC Department of Health and Human Services Environmental Epidemiology Branch to participate in a pilot program of a CDC initiative, Building Resilient Environmental Health Capacity (BREHC), to address well and water quality issues during natural disasters.
- ◆ The Chatham Health Alliance held more than 34 Resource Hubs throughout the county to support the Chatham community as it responds to COVID-19. Resource Hubs are a mobile, colocation of resources from multiple partner agencies, including Insight Human Services, Communities in Schools, CORA, Public Health, the Interfaith Food Shuttle, and more. The Hub provided community members with resources and information, including food, medication disposal and safety, early childhood resources, and COVID-19 vaccines.
- ◆ CCPHD has been preparing for the 2021 Chatham County Community Assessment, which kicks off in the fall 2021.

Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Board of Elections

Board of Elections offices were classified as critical infrastructure by the Department of Homeland Security during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chatham County Board of Elections and the elections staff held a successful historic Presidential Election amid the COVID-19 pandemic with record voter turnout during a countywide cyber incident, which did not interrupt or compromise the voting process.

Key Stats

- ◆ Highest voter turnout in the state 84.26%
- ◆ Mailed 16,869 ballots/Returned 12,169 ballots
- ◆ Early voting 31,465
- ◆ Election Day 4,723
- ◆ Record number of curbside voters
- ◆ Added 2 early voting sites
- ◆ Provided Sunday voting for the first time
- ◆ Hired record number of new election officials 120
- ◆ Held 40 in-person election officials training sessions
- ◆ Created 4 videos as supplemental training source for election officials to access online
- ◆ Collaborated with Board of Education to use school gyms and multipurpose rooms to allow for proper guidelines issued by the CDC
- ◆ Temporarily reassigned 13 precincts out of 18 to new polling places
- ◆ Mailed notifications to 55,488 voters with polling place change and other election information



Chatham County Board of Elections Staff
Left to right: Temporary employee Donald Lyerly, Elections Specialist Chance Mashburn, Director Pandora Paschal, Deputy Director Steve Simos, Elections Assistant Madeline Mason

Ensuring Health Safety

- ◆ Provided personal protective equipment (PPE) to all early voting sites and Election Day polling places.
- ◆ Set up air purifiers in all early voting sites
- ◆ Placed social distancing markers 6 feet apart at each site
- ◆ Used Plexi glass dividers at each polling station
- ◆ Provided pens to each voter to keep as a souvenir
- ◆ Contracted cleaning service to clean each polling site after the election

Technology Upgrades

- ◆ Added new data ports and replaced old cabling to setup a phone bank at the office to handle phone calls.
- ◆ Leased additional office space to receive absentee ballots by mail. Added an additional server to assist with livestreaming absentee board meetings for viewing by the public. (see left)
- ◆ Purchased postage machine and a letter opener to assist with the overwhelming number of requests for absentee ballots.
- ◆ Absentee Ballot Request Portal was implemented by the NC State Board of Elections for voters to make request online.
- ◆ Launched Omni Portal to assist visually impaired voters request a ballot, receive the ballot, and return the ballot online.
- ◆ Launched Democracy Heroes portal to recruit additional election officials. Chatham County received More than 600 submissions.



Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Social Services

- ◆ The Chatham County Department of Social Services organized an Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month drop-in event in June 2021 to raise awareness.
 - ◇ All employees participated in a “Wear Purple Day” in honor of the 1 in 6 people who are 60 and older and experience some form of abuse resulting in physical injury or long-term psychological harm.
- ◆ In collaboration with Piedmont Health Services, the Department of Social Services developed a referral process for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to ensure that all potentially eligible families can be screened, resulting in a 210% increase in referrals from May to July 2021.
 - ◇ The WIC program provides free, supplemental nutritious foods for income-eligible pregnant and postpartum, women, infants, and children until their 5th birthday. This initiative was coordinated with the EMBRACe (Equity for Moms and Babies Realized Across Chatham) grant, aimed at improving birth outcomes for mothers and babies in Chatham County.
- ◆ The Chatham County Court Services program launched a Family Treatment Court program, serving child welfare involved families where a parental substance use disorder has been identified.
 - ◇ This grant will provide life changing supports including parenting and treatment to improve outcomes and reduce the length of time that children experience foster care.
- ◆ To improve services to the public during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the Department of Social Services developed a curb-side service model. This allows individuals to be seen face to face by a case worker outside the Social Services office and provides another option in addition to mail, phone, and online services already available.



Court Programs

- ◆ Created Family Treatment Court program in collaboration with the Chatham County Department of Social Services in April 2021
- ◆ Obtained funding from the Office of Juvenile and Justice and Delinquency Prevention for \$850,000 for 3 years

Libraries

- ◆ Chatham County Public Libraries closed to the public March 17, 2020, but began non-contact curbside services for patrons to pick up library materials.
- ◆ Reopened to the public with limited hours on April 5, 2021
- ◆ Resumed pre-Covid operating hours on May 26, 2021
- ◆ Completed a countywide library needs assessment survey with more than 780 responses. Survey results are available on the library website: www.chathamlibraries.org
- ◆ Offered 347 virtual programs for both children and adults with more than 3,000 in attendance
- ◆ Answered more than 10,800 reference questions including those related to employment and technology
- ◆ Circulated more than 77,100 items (print and electronic)
- ◆ Created 1,443 new library card accounts during FY 20-21. An online library card application was made available to the public upon closing due to COVID-19. The application remains active, and the library continues to receive requests for new accounts
- ◆ Instituted outdoor story time (see above) for children beginning in June 2021 at three different county locations, Pittsboro, Siler City, and Goldston

Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs



Pittsboro-Siler City Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)

The Pittsboro-Siler City Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) continued to promote safe travel during each of the phases and updates of Executive Orders throughout the pandemic.

- ◆ CVB distributed a weekly newsletter to more than 750 businesses in the local tourism and hospitality industry, more than 1,600 contacts. The electronic news provided updates, information, business resources, free webinar information, small business guidance and support, and safe travel marketing messaging and opportunities. Newsletter was weekly for approximately 14 months, then biweekly.
- ◆ CVB successfully completed [Count On Me NC](#) certification and promoted the statewide award-winning program to the local tourism and hospitality industry. CVB distributed more than 1,000 Count On Me NC masks to participating certified businesses (masks purchased through grant funding).
- ◆ CVB presented at Global Meetings Industry Day, [Rules of Engagement](#) #MeetingsMeanBusiness
- ◆ CVB presented to Visit NC and their national marketing firm to discuss Chatham County's safe travel and marketing strategies. Also presented to NC Commerce in separate presentation.
- ◆ CVB presented at [NC Bloggers Wine Summit, Mastering the Media Kit](#)
- ◆ CVB expanded tourism website and launched website redesign for focus on safe travel, including safety protocol for each visitor business (when available by business).



Ferrington Village Event Venue, Pittsboro

Parks and Recreation



- ◆ Opened the first Chatham County Parks and Recreation Dog Park at The Park at Briar Chapel (see left)
- ◆ Opened the first Chatham County Parks and Recreation Community Center at Chatham Grove Elementary School (see below)
- ◆ Hosted 10 Pop-Up Playground programs across the county to offer the community a safe way to recreate outside during the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ Created an at-home camp experience, during the pandemic,



- through the Camp Kit program
- ◆ Hosted Trunk or Treat: Boo-Thru
- ◆ Hosted Holiday in the Park: Holly Jolly Drive-Thru
- ◆ Hosted Hunt at Home: Easter Egg Drive-Thru
- ◆ Hosted youth programming such as Track and Field
- ◆ Helped plan and execute the Senior Games as members of the Senior Games Steering Committee
- ◆ Helped plan and execute Chatham 250 celebrations as members of Chatham 250 Events and Activities Committee
- ◆ Staff volunteered at the Chatham County Public Health COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics
- ◆ Hosted passive programming such as Foot Golf, St. Patrick's Day Treasure Hunt, Mobile Story Walks, and more
- ◆ Hosted 4 Movies in the Park events
- ◆ Kicked off the 2021 Summer Camp season in collaboration with Chatham County Schools to cover the full cost for all campers

Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Council on Aging

Founded in July 1974, the Chatham County Council on Aging celebrated its 46th anniversary in 2021 by *continuing its exemplary service to the community.*

Highlights of Service and Outreach

- ◆ 37,320 total meals served (Congregate, Shelf Stable, Frozen, and Home Delivered -see right)
- ◆ In Home Aide hours of personal care: 20,135
- ◆ Medical Transportation: 2,482 rides
- ◆ Hours of Family Caregiver Respite: 3,097 hours
- ◆ Information and Referrals: 18,513 (over 1500/mo.)
- ◆ Incontinence supplies (average 95/mo. x 30 adult diapers per client)

Facilities Projects

- ◆ With support from The Cannon Foundation, the Chatham County Council on Aging was able to undertake some enhancements of the Western Center in Siler City:
 - ◇ Replacement of flooring in its library/computer/game room
 - ◇ Interior wall repair and painting
 - ◇ Construction of a second concrete handicap ramp with handrails for entrance into the center



Helping Homebound Heroes



"The bathroom is a lot safer!"
- Charles
Chatham County Hero
& Marine Veteran



Housing Development and Assistance

- ◆ The Chatham County Council on Aging was one of three nonprofit organizations from across the nation selected by Meals on Wheels America and the Home Depot Foundation to receive a \$85,000 Helping Homebound Heroes Grant to assist veterans with needed home modification and repairs to help them continue living safely at home (see left). Working with Rebuilding Together of the Triangle, 18 veterans were assisted. Because of its success, the Council received a second round of funding (\$100,000) to assist at least 18 more veterans.

COVID-19 Response

- ◆ To help seniors remain connected to the community while continuing to shelter in place, the Chatham County Council on Aging secured private competitive grants for purchase of a 6-month subscription to the *Chatham News + Record* for 218 seniors. In each weekly issue of the paper, the Council announced its upcoming programming.
- ◆ The Chatham County Council on Aging organized a virtual Angel Tree event that helped over 90 seniors.
- ◆ Because of such efforts, the National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging chose the Council to be one of three agencies across the country to present in a national webinar on "Addressing Nutrition and Social Connection Needs of Rural Older Adults during the COVID-19 Emergency."

Improving Digital Access

- ◆ Knowing the adverse effect of social isolation, the Chatham County Council on Aging secured two competitive BAND NC grants totaling \$10,000 from NC State University's Institute for Emerging Studies to help bridge the digital gap for some seniors in Chatham County. After very deliberative research, it purchased Claris-Companion tablets and provided training. Using a survey based on UCLA's Loneliness Scale (validated as a useful indicator of isolation and loneliness) the Council was encouraged to see a decreased sense of loneliness among users after just one month.

Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Cooperative Extension

In 2021, the N.C. Cooperative Extension Chatham County Center continued to support the community through online, in-person, and hybrid educational platforms to keep farmers/producers safe; to support overwhelmed parents, teachers, and caregivers; to help restaurants reopen safely; and to nurture a new wave of home gardeners and cooks.

- ◆ Amid COVID-19 restrictions, the Chatham County Cooperative Extension staff acquired 13,569 direct contacts through educational programs and consultations offered through agriculture, 4-H youth development, and family and consumer sciences disciplines. Through an influx of video and multimedia created by Cooperative Extension staff, more than 2.3 million indirect contacts were generated through mass and digital media platforms for visitors across the country.



- ◆ Volunteers remained critical for the Chatham County Cooperative Extension's community outreach efforts. Throughout 2021, 854 volunteers provided 2,713 volunteer hours that resulted in 9,694 known client contacts within Chatham County; this equated to service in the amount of \$70,484.
- ◆ The Visit NC Farms App, ran in conjunction with the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences and Chatham County Cooperative Extension, was piloted in Fall 2020 and formally brought online in Chatham County in Spring 2021. The app connects millions of residents and visitors across North Carolina—and specifically in Chatham County—to farmers, farmers markets, and local food one community at a time.

Join today!



- ◆ The N.C. Cooperative Extension Annual Report has moved online. For more information on local efforts of the Chatham County Center and how that impacts Cooperative Extension on a state level, the community can check out the 2020-2021 report found here: https://issuu.com/tjmoore3/docs/extension_annual_report_2020-2021_digital



Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Environmental Quality

Partnership to Increase Backyard Composting

The Solid Waste & Recycling division (SW&R) and the Chatham County Cooperative Extension partnered together on a project to increase backyard composting in Chatham County. They received a \$4000 grant from the NC Department of Environmental Quality to provide backyard composting bins (see right) or vermicomposting bins to county residents. Through the grant:

- Staff conducted two virtual Fundamentals of Composting workshops
- Reached 90 Chatham County residents through the workshops.
- Provided 100 compost bins and 36 vermicomposting bins at a discounted rate.

Food waste makes up about a quarter of waste generated by a household. The more people compost, the less waste to dispose of in landfills.



Don't Waste It!

Don't Waste It!

Don't Waste It! is an educator guide to waste management, recycling, composting, and waste reduction, for formal and non-formal educators with lessons for pre-K to 12th graders. *Don't Waste It!* was created by Shannon Culpepper, Recycling & Education Specialist (see right). Chatham County partnered with Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance and received an Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Education grant to expand *Don't Waste It!* to the southeast region. One year into the two-year grant, *Don't Waste It!* guides have been developed for North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida, and 35 facilitators have been trained to provide educator workshops in their state. Over the next year, those facilitators will reach more than 280 educators through their workshops and over 100 will participate in an online workshop.



Expanded Large Electronics Recycling

In response to several comments in the county's 2019 biennial customer service survey, recycling of large electronics items has been expanded to three of the county's 12 collection centers. Previously, residents could only drop off electronics large than 25" or weighing more than 50 pounds at the main facility. Now, these larger items can be dropped off at Bonlee, Cole Park, and Pittsboro collection centers. This greatly expands the hours and locations available to properly dispose of these items.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station Grants

The Sustainability division received two grants to install Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations (see below). These were funded by the Volkswagen Settlement Fund through the NC Division of Environmental Quality. The stations will be located at the Smithfield's Chicken 'N Bar-B-Q parking lot in Siler City and the Chatham County Agriculture and Convention Center parking lot in Pittsboro. The stations should be installed and operational by the end of 2021.



Expanding the EV Fleet

The Environmental Quality department purchased the county's second EV, a Nissan Leaf. Plans are in place across the county fleet to purchase additional EVs as existing county vehicles become due for replacement.

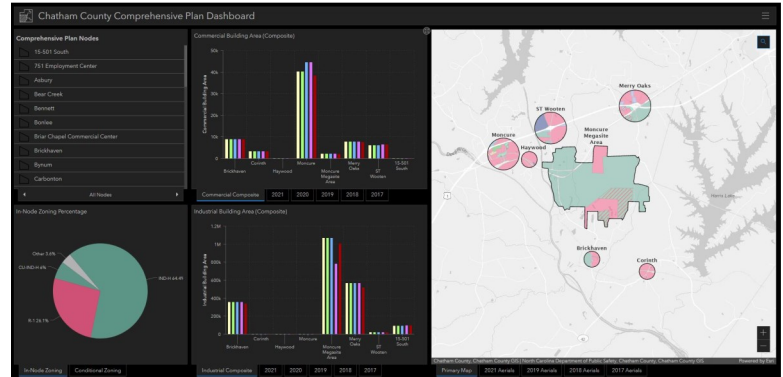
Highlights from Departments, Offices, and Programs

Management & Information Systems (MIS)

Chatham County Management & Information Systems (MIS) spent much of the year responding to, and recovering from, a ransomware event that incapacitated many of the counties' business systems for a period of two to three months. The response to the cyber incident included extensive mitigation efforts to ensure that Chatham County's network is more secure and resilient moving forward. (Read more on the Cyber Incident on page 2.)

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Comp Plan Dashboard Web mapping application created in collaboration with the Chatham County Planning Department to provide a snapshot of development around the nodes identified in the Chatham County Comprehensive Plan (see right).



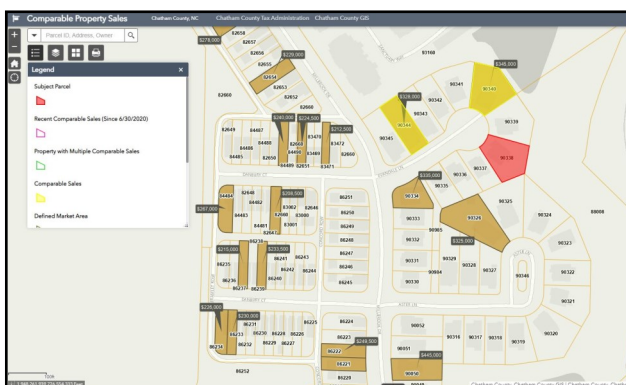
Public Health Vaccination Sites & Distribution

Ongoing data initiative with the Chatham County Public Health Department to use GIS data to make data driven decisions on where to locate sites for vaccine distribution.

Chatham County GIS also assisted the Public Health department in aggregating data at the census block group level to identify vaccination rates and case locations throughout Chatham County as part of an ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Aggregation of this data allows the Public Health Department to identify where their resources are most needed.

Next generation 9-1-1 (NG911) Collaborative mapping effort between Chatham County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Chatham County GIS, GeoComm, & the State of North Carolina to prepare Chatham County's 9-1-1 GIS data for readiness within the Statewide 911 EsiNet utilized for emergency response call routing. Chatham County GIS worked with the state's contracted vendor, GeoComm, to ensure the data met the rigid standards required for Next Gen call routing. This work involved QA/QC of existing data in collaboration with EOC staff and developing an automated and repeatable process for translation of county GIS data into the state EsiNet. This was accomplished with the development of an ETL script that automates this process on a defined schedule saving staff resources and keeping data compliant.

Comparable Sales Application The Comparable Sales application (see left) is an interactive mapping application that can be used to explore recent property sales within Chatham County. Residents may enhance understanding of their property's tax appraisal value by examining sales of properties that are similar to their own. The application provides several tools and accompanying documentation to simplify the task of real estate research within the county. This application features property sales data from January 1, 2019, to January 1, 2021. It also includes current tax parcel information, reference mapping layers and aerial photography.



Sheriff Zones The Chatham County Sheriff's Office and Chatham County EOC requested assistance with creating new response zones based on a data driven analysis of call density. Chatham County GIS worked with the Sheriff's Office and EOC to identify parameters that would influence the decision-making process on where to draw new response boundaries based on what the data said. GIS developed a model that allowed for repeatable results based on user given parameters. This allowed for different scenarios to be modeled easily which resulted in a more informed decision making process for the Sheriff's Office and EOC.

Tax Office

- ◆ The Chatham County Tax Office collected 99.37% of 2020 property taxes.
- ◆ Implemented new payment option with the Papaya app
- ◆ Tax Collections and Utility Billing and Collections moved to the Payment Center at 192 West Street, Pittsboro, that allows residents to pay via a drive-thru window service
- ◆ Real property tax reappraisal was completed through a contract with Vincent Valuations and became effective January 1, 2021.

Chatham County Awards and Honors

For the 8th straight year, Chatham County received several top awards from the North Carolina Department of Labor for outstanding safety practices. In August 2021, the Annual Safety Awards were held in Asheboro, NC. Commissioner of Labor Josh Dobson presented Chatham County with 11 Gold Awards (see right):

- ◆ Gold First Year Facilities
- ◆ Gold First Year Recreation
- ◆ Gold First Year Health Department
- ◆ Gold Third Consecutive Year Social Services
- ◆ Gold Third Consecutive Year Solid Waste & Recycling
- ◆ Gold Fifth Consecutive Year Water & Water Treatment Plant
- ◆ Gold Sixth Consecutive Year Chatham County (which includes, Register of Deeds, County Manager's Office, Finance, Permitting, Planning, and all others not listed)
- ◆ Gold Eighth Consecutive Year Chatham County Library
- ◆ Gold Eighth Consecutive Year MIS
- ◆ Gold Eighth Consecutive Year Tax
- ◆ Gold Eighth Consecutive Year Telecommunications



Chatham County real property appraiser, Lawana Schulze (see left), played a role in North Carolina achieving the award of the Virginia cup at the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) conference by receiving her Residential Evaluation Specialist (RES) designation.

The Chatham County Finance Department received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA).

- ◆ This is the 31st consecutive year the county received this national recognition.
- ◆ This is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting.
- ◆ According to GFOA, its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Central Carolina Community College (CCCC)

- ◆ 2020-2021 second highest enrollment, with more than 1,100 Chatham County residents enrolled in programming.
- ◆ CCCC's Dental Hygiene program has been ranked as the No. 1 Best Dental Hygiene Program in North Carolina, according to NursingProcess.org.
- ◆ CCCC has been awarded a \$1,499,655 grant from the Department of Labor to educate, empower, and employ individuals ages 16-24 over the next three years in the YouthBuild program.